

VZCZCXRO0353
RR RUEHDT
DE RUEHDT #0005 0060942
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 060942Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY DILI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4189
INFO RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 1024
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1250
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0986
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 0062
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0615
RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI 3688

UNCLAS DILI 000005

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MTS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [RP](#) [TT](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY DILI ADVOCATES IMPORT OF U.S. BEEF AND POULTRY IN
TIMOR-LESTE

¶1. (U) On December 12, Poloff met with Secretary of State for Livestock Valentino Varela from the Ministry of Agriculture to request lifting of a current ban on U.S. beef and poultry products into Timor-Leste. The ban came to our attention through two Dili supermarket retailers, who reported that their requests to import U.S. poultry and beef were denied by the Government of Timor-Leste (GOTL). Since 2003, the GOTL has prohibited the importation of U.S. origin poultry meat due to reported incidents of avian influenza (AI) in the United States. Post is awaiting the GOTL's response to our request.

¶2. (U) On March 26, 2008, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) office in Manila wrote to Timor-Leste's National Quarantines Director Mr. Rui Daniel Carvalho requesting that this ban be removed and safe trade in poultry meat and meat products be allowed in accordance with international guidelines. In response, the Ministry of Agriculture acknowledged receipt of the letter, noting that the ban will remain in effect because of Timor-Leste's lack of capacity to handle a possible mass AI outbreak. Poloff's December 12 meeting was post's second intervention with the GOTL to request lifting of these bans.

¶3. (U) In response to our appeal to open Timor's market to U.S. poultry and beef imports, based on input from the USDA office in Manila, Secretary of State Varela replied that the GOTL maintains its ban based on concerns over the levels of AI in U.S. poultry. He further underscored concerns about the government's lack of capacity in personnel and resources to deal with possible mass outbreaks of AI or mad cow disease.

¶4. (U) Secretary of State Varela reported that Timor-Leste imports poultry exclusively from Brazil and Australia, beef from Australia and New Zealand, and eggs from Malaysia. He added that imports of poultry products from Indonesia are also banned due to AI concerns. Underscoring the GOTL's commitment to fair trade, Varela stressed that trade preferences towards other countries was not a factor in implementing the ban.

¶5. (U) Secretary of State Varela noted that he will discuss our request for a lifting of the ban with the Minister of Agriculture and key government officials. On January 5, Varela informed Poloff that an answer to our request will be forthcoming from the Government of Timor-Leste. Post will report the government's response.

KLEMM